The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE — 1 BILLION DOLLARS IN WAR SAVINGS BONDS FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1770 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1945 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 35, NO. 11

Green Urges Stronger Price Control As Safeguard For Two More Years

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green urged the United States Senate to continue the Price Control Act for another two years to protect the American people from the ravages of inflation.

Appearing at a public hearing before the Senate Banking Committee, Mr. Green said:

"The nation's need for price control is two-fold. First, it provides a tool for saving people's money. Price control has effected enormous savings to the American people in holding down the prices paid by the government for munitions and equipment. It is estimated that the current volume of war production purchased by the government since July, 1940, would have cost us nearly $100 billion more in the absence of price control. That is a direct saving of people's money.

"Second the OPA price control has been the most important stabilizer of the wartime dollar. Continuation of price control now is necessary if the hard-earned money the holders of War Bonds have entrusted to the government is to be repaid in full when the bonds mature. When our soldiers return they will expect and demand opportunities for work and income as well as compensation due to them under stable conditions. If we permit prices to run away and the dollar to depreciate, we will be cheating the servicemen, the worker, the farmer and the businessman—we will be cheating ourselves out of our future incomes. We will be cheating the nation out of its future prosperity."

While conceding that administration of the price control program has improved considerably during the past year under Chester Bowles, Mr. Green pointed out that there have been and and still remain dangerous weaknesses in the enforcement of government controls on living costs. He said:

"For example, since May, 1943, the cost of clothing increased by 11.6 percent. House furnishings went up 14.3 percent. On the face of it this means a 12½ percent increase in prices which constitute one-sixth of the total living cost. In reality this increase was far greater. Quality deterioration has continued and is still continuing at a precipitous rate. This is especially true in clothing, house furnishings and other textile products.

"It is, of course, impossible to find a precise measure of the increased cost to the consumer imposed by quality deterioration. We do know, however, that when shoes and shirts wear out twice as rapidly as they do normally the family's expenditure for such essential cost of living items is doubled. In addition to outright price inflation in wearing apparel there has been a tremendous inflation resulting from the lowered quality of the product.

"We believe it is possible to assure to the consumer future stability in the quality of goods as well as stability in prices. We believe that immediate study should be given by the agencies concerned and by Congress in establishing effective quality control in all lines of goods essential to the cost of living.

"It is also important to note that inflationary pressure has gone unchecked in several important sectors of the economy not subject to price control. For example, sale prices for homes, farmland and other real estate properties have registered a sharp increase which has been rapidly accelerated in the last year. The Residential Research Committee of Los Angeles has made a study which indicates that the selling price of single family dwellings has increased 60 percent in the area.

"These increases impose a heavy pressure upon the established rent ceilings and are making rent control more and more difficult."

Full employment after the war depends in large measure on the price policies adopted by OPA during reconversion, Mr. Green warned. He said OPA must not permit prices of civilian goods on which production is resumed to go any higher than the levels maintained in 1941 and 1942 when such production was halted by the war. If prices are raised beyond that point, Mr. Green said, commodities will be placed out of the reach of the great mass of wage earners and the prospects of high production and full employment will disappear.

Mr. Green emphasized that price control has not cut profits, citing widespread high profit figures as proof. Pressure to weaken or modify price control based upon pleas of hardship by business must appear somewhat hypocritical in the face of the fact of unprecedented business profits, the AFL leader declared.

Labor has participated whole heartedly and effectively in guarding against price violations and in stamping out black markets, Mr. Green told the Senate committee.

Meany Praises Mexico City Parley As Step Toward Peace, Security

Washington, D. C.—Returned from the Inter-American Conference on the Problems of War and Peace at Mexico City, which he attended as labor adviser to the United States delegation, AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany declared the actions of the meeting augur well for the maintenance of permanent peace in the Western Hemisphere.

Describing the results of the conference in an article in the current issue of the American Federationist, Mr. Meany called it "one of the most successful international meetings of all time."

"For the first time in pan-American history," he said, "definite procedures were established for the application of economic and military sanctions against any would-be warmaker."

Mr. Meany bestowed particular praise on the Economic Charter of the Americas, which was adopted at the conference. This charter when implemented by action of the individual nations participating, "must inevitably be one of the brightest pages in the story of man's unending struggle for economic betterment," he said.

The charter guarantees to workers throughout the hemisphere the right to join together into trade unions and it endorses labor's right to bargain collectively with employers, Mr. Meany pointed out. He added:

"In the writer's judgment the frank, constructive tone of the conference as a whole was probably inspired, at least in part, by the free and open manner in which the affairs of the American delegation were conducted. Labor, agriculture and business were given a full voice within the American delegation. All the resolutions and declarations introduced by the United States were the result of free discussion within the delegation and had the full approval of the representatives of labor, business and agriculture."

7-Billion-Dollar Housing Program Ready For Congress, Senators Say

Washington, D. C.—U. S. Senator Allen J. Ellender, of Louisiana, announced that he and Senator Robert F. Wagner, of New York, will introduce in Congress soon legislation for a nation-wide post-war housing program contemplating public and private investment of six to seven billion dollars a year in housing construction.

Appearing on the AFL's "America United" radio program over NBC in place of Sen. Wagner, who was ill, the Louisiana solon emphasized that without a comprehensive housing program full employment cannot be realized. He said:

"The American economy after the war must do two things:—First, it must offer the opportunity of employment to everyone who is willing and able to work; and second, it must give every American family a chance to enjoy the high living standards that full employment can produce.

"A vast post-war housing program will help to achieve employment. Decent housing, for the millions who do not now have it, will help to raise standards of living. By both of these tests, housing is near the top of things we must do when victory comes. Now is the time to get ready.

"We have fought a bigger war than ever before. We have accomplished marvels of production. We have the highest national income on record. The problems of transition from war to peace will be tremendous. After the war one of two things will happen:—either we will have more prosperity and more business activity than ever before, or we will have a worse depression than ever before.

"We must think bold thoughts. We must make broad plans. We must do big things.

"What does this mean in housing?

"During the ten years before the war, we built an average of less than 275,000 non-farm houses each year. In the first ten years after the war, we must raise this figure to almost 1,500,000 houses a year.

"Instead of investing only about $1,000,000,000 a year in the building of housing, we must invest six or seven billion dollars a year.

"Every little mind that says: 'this cannot be done,' is an obstacle to our economic progress. Every selfish interest that says, 'we will not allow this to be done,' is an enemy to our economic security—an enemy to the fighting men who want jobs after the war—an enemy to the families of these men, who want decent homes after the war.

"A forward-looking Congress must take the leadership toward enacting such a program. I expect to introduce legislation toward that end."

Boris Shishkin, representing the AFL on the program, strongly endorsed the Senator's recommendations and asked whether it might be possible to obtain agreement among all interested groups so that the housing drive can get started soon. Sen. Ellender replied that if labor, industry and the farmers cooperate, Congress would be bound to respect their wishes.

AFL Pays Honor To Seabees In New CBS Radio Series

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor will pay honor to the Seabees in a series of thirteen weekly radio programs opening April 7 over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The Seabees are the construction battalions of the U. S. Navy, as everyone knows. But few people realize that about 80 per cent of the enrollment of the Seabees were recruited from the building trades and metal trades unions of the AFL.

Therefore, the AFL feels particularly proud of the glorious war record of the Seabees. Outstanding episodes of Seabee accomplishments in all theaters of war will be told in dramatized form in the radio series. These will be true stories and real names will be used.

The programs have been officially approved by the Navy Department and will be broadcast with the cooperation of CBS which is making available its time and facilities free of charge to the American Federation of Labor.

Watch for the opening program to be broadcast at 3:45 P.M., E.W.T., April 7 and follow the succeeding episodes each Saturday at the same time.

Fringe Pay Grants, Less Than G-String, Conceded By Vinson In Last Decree

Washington, D. C.—As his last official act before stepping out as Economic Stabilization Director, Fred M. Vinson issued a directive freezing "fringe" wage adjustments along with already frozen basic pay rates.

Mr. Vinson's ruling was supposed to be a "concession" to labor because it relaxed his hitherto ironbound rule against the granting by the National War Labor Board of any "fringe" adjustments which might necessitate price increases—but the "fringe" permitted by Mr. Vinson was regarded by labor leaders as less than a strip-tease dancer's G-string.

The Vinson order appeared likely to prove increasingly embarrassing to his successor, William H. Davis, who is stepping up from Chairman of the National War Labor Board, because he carried on a minor feud with Mr. Vinson on the "fringe" issue.

In his former job, Mr. Davis declared that the NWLB found it next to impossible to keep the peace on the nation's production front because its freedom of action was restricted on the one hand by the wage freeze prescribed by the Little Steel formula and on the other by Mr. Vinson's original decree forbidding the board from awarding "fringe" adjustments which might result in price increases.

In his new post, Mr. Davis will be in the unenviable position of reversing his role and telling the NWLB that it cannot go beyond the strict limits of the new ruling he inherited from Mr. Vinson.

The new ruling permits the NWLB to award "fringe" even when price increases follow but only in the following respects:

"Vacation provisions up to 1 week after 1 year of service and 2 weeks after 5 years of service.

"Shift differentials in non-continuous operations not to exceed 4 cents per hour for the second shift and 8 cents per hour for the third shift.

"Merit increases and automatic progression on a basis no more liberal than that embodied in the board's present standards.

"Reclassifications and job reevaluations not to exceed an average increase for all employes in the plant or plants covered by the order or authorization of 1 cent per hour or 1 percent.

"The board shall continue to use its present safeguards to prevent such adjustments from becoming general wage increases. In rare and unusual cases, affecting the critical needs of war production, the board may authorize or direct reclassifications or reevaluations in excess of these amounts, but such adjustments shall become effective only if approved by the Director of Economic Stabilization."

If all of the foregoing quotation isn't clear to you, don't be alarmed. It isn't clear to the National War Labor Board nor to the new Economic Stabilization Director, Mr. Davis. Before long, "interpretations" may be expected and then the visibility probably will be reduced to zero.

DAVIS SUCCEEDS VINSON AS STABILIZATION HEAD

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt appointed William H. Davis, chairman of the National War Labor Board, to be Director of Economic Stabilization, succeeding Fred M. Vinson, who was named Federal Loan Administrator. Dr. George W. Taylor, NWLB vice chairman, was designated as Mr. Davis' successor.

Both appointments are promotions within the executive offices of the President and Senate confirmation will not be required.

Full Employment Seen By Kaiser As Only Way To "Save America"

Washington, D. C.—Henry J. Kaiser, the shipbuilder, appearing before the Senate's Small Business Committee, made a vigorous appeal for a policy which would direct disposal of war plants for the primary objective of maintaining employment.

"There is only one way to save America after this war," said Mr. Kaiser, "and that is to provide employment. It is the only way to repay the people who have fought and keep faith with those who died for us, and that is to provide jobs and to create prosperity."

Mr. Kaiser said the war plants could not be sold and kept operating by disposal "on a high dollar return for the sales," and criticized the present surplus property disposal system as so complicated and unclear that manufacturers would be kept negotiating for months and still to no avail.

"There are three alternatives," he said, "the first is for the Government to take over and operate these plants. The second is to junk these factories, tear down, or close them up. I cannot believe that either of these alternatives would represent the will of the people or the intention of Congress. The third alternative is that these facilities should be made available to industry for the creation of employment without which we can have neither peace nor prosperity. To me this is the democratic way and it conforms to our American methods of production."

Mr. Kaiser suggested a plan of disposal whereby bidders for these Government plants, otherwise to be closed at the end of the war, should submit an offer based on the number of men they would guarantee to keep working, and that the contract price should not be set until after time enough had elapsed to demonstrate that they were able to make good their employment claims.

Senate Kills Forced Labor; Showdown Coming In House

Hopes For Passage of Voluntary Manpower Plan Increase

Washington, D. C.—Having won a smashing victory in the Senate, the American Federation of Labor prepared for a show-down battle in the House against compulsory manpower legislation.

Efforts will be made to induce the House to concur with the Senate bill which is satisfactory to labor. While the House passed a dangerous forced-labor bill, it was considered likely that a majority would now agree to go along with the Senate measure.

One of the important factors in the situation was the overwhelming vote of 63 to 16 by which the Senate rejected the House-approved May-Bailey Bill and adopted the O'Mahoney-Kilgore substitute.

The latter measure contains no penalties against workers but provides fines and jail penalties for employers who willfully violate manpower ceilings and other controls of the War Manpower Commission.

The bill gives the WMC statutory authority for the first time to go into war plants and eliminate manpower waste and hoarding.

Labor will be affected in this way: If the War Manpower Commission decides that the working staff of an employer is too high, it will set a lower ceiling, thus requiring the discharge of a number of workers. These workers will then be directed by the WMC to take other and more vital war jobs. If they fail to accept jobs approved by the WMC, they will be denied certificates of availability and will be unable to get another job. In other words, displaced workers will have to take jobs approved by the WMC or have no jobs.

This arrangement was considered severe enough by organized labor but far preferable to the May-Bailey Bill which meant work or jail.

Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming, one of the co-sponsors of the legislation passed by the Senate, said:

"I want to congratulate the Senate for using, as it did, reason over emotional appeal."

Powerful forces, including the military authorities and the White House, lined up against labor in the Senate fight on manpower legislation. These forces demanded the passage of the May-Bailey Bill or an equally forcible labor draft. Labor's opposition to such drastic legislation was supported by industry and, to a smaller extent, by farm organizations.

One of the most treacherous desertions from labor's policy was perpetrated by the Communist-dominated unions of the CIO. Some of them openly and others secretly applied pressure in favor of a labor draft, thus betraying the official position of their own CIO organization.

These activities were so pronounced that they drew condemnation from Milton Murray, president of the CIO Newspaper Guild, who wrote a news story in "PM" exposing the Communists' activities. For this story he was denounced by the New York City CIO Industrial Council, which frequently follows the Communist line. Defending Murray, the executive board of the Guild adopted a resolution accusing the Communists and Rep. Marcantonio of New York of treachery to labor.

Heroism Of AFL Union Worker Earns DSC, Highest Medal

Washington, D. C.—The Distinguished Service Cross, highest honor that can be awarded by a commander on the field of battle, has been won by Sgt. William Hodge, Pittsburgh, Pa., member of the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen's Union, AFL. For seven years prior to entering the service he was employed by the Wilson Packing Company.

According to the War Department, Hodge was in Italy on May 11, 1944, when our forces made a night attack against strong enemy positions. During the fierce fighting he and a comrade, with total disregard for their own safety, attacked and destroyed an enemy machinegun nest, which was harassing their advance, and killed three enemy soldiers.

In the words of the official citation: "Their action at the risk of their lives was of material value to their company in the successful accomplishment of its mission. The aggressiveness and display of courage under heavy enemy fire shown by these men reflect the high traditions of the military service."

Federal Court Deals Death Blow To Anti-Labor Kansas State Law

Washington, D. C.—A special Federal Court knocked out the most obnoxious sections of the Kansas Anti-Labor Law as unconstitutional in a ruling which may have a far-reaching effect on the vicious campaign to enact similar legislation in other States.

Hailing the decision as a major victory for labor, AFL Counsel Joseph A. Padway declared that it points the way to the invalidation of the recently adopted anti-closed shop amendments in Florida and Arkansas.

Keynote of the Kansas decision was the unanimous statement of the three judges that the right to strike peaceably and to bargain collectively are "fundamental human liberties which the State cannot condition or abridge."

The Court threw out the three of the worst features of the Kansas law which provided:

1—That a majority of all workers in a plant must vote in favor of striking before a strike would be considered legal.

2—That so-called "secondary" boycotts by unions were illegal.

3—That picketing a strike resulting from jurisdictional disputes were illegal and prohibited.

However, a majority of the court, with Circuit Judge Huxman dissenting, upheld two other sections of the law requiring unions to file financial reports and requiring officers and business agents to register and obtain licenses.

Mr. Padway said an appeal would be taken to the United States Supreme Court with regard to the decision on the latter provisions. He said the highest court had not yet passed on these issues.

POCKETBOOK WORKERS GET HOSPITALIZATION BENEFITS

New York City.—In keeping with nation-wide efforts to raise health standards, the Pocketbook Workers Union here in cooperation with the Industrial Council of the National Authority of the Ladies Handbag Industry and 359 independent manufacturers, have approved hospitalization and surgical indemnity benefits for more than 9,000 pocketbook and leather goods novelty workers through the Associated Hospital Service of New York, it was announced by Ossip Walinsky, Executive Director of the Union. The entire cost will be paid by the manufacturers.

Mr. Walinsky predicted that the provision of health benefits for union members would result in greater good will and efficiency throughout the industry.

The workers will be entitled to 21 days of complete hospitalization without charge plus 90 extra days at one-half the hospital's usual charges whenever they may require hospitalization. This service will be provided in semi-private accommodations in any one of 260 cooperating hospitals in Greater New York.

MACHINISTS WIN CONTRACT AFTER PROTRACTED PARLEY

Elmira, N. Y.—After two years of negotiations, Remington Rand, Inc., and Local 826, International Association of Machinists signed a 33-point contract providing payment of retroactive wages from August, 1942, and guaranteeing job security in the post-war period.

Described by the union as "one of the most complete contracts ever signed," it includes provisions for union recognition, voluntary checkoff, overtime and seniority, and special clauses on reconversion and privileges of union members in the plants as well as retroactive pay.

AFL COMES OUT AGAINST MEXICAN WATER TREATY

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor joined with the railroad brotherhoods and many other national organizations in opposing the proposed treaty giving Mexico 1,500,000 acre-feet of water from Boulder Dam and the Colorado River.

Appearing before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, AFL Legislative Representative Lewis G. Hines declared the treaty would wipe out necessary and proper immigration safeguards for the protection of American workers and the American public.

Other organizations which have enlisted in the fight against the treaty include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the National Grange.

AFL WINS ELECTIONS IN TWO TORONTO TESTS

Toronto, Can.—The AFL scored two decisive victories in employe elections conducted by the Ontario Labor Relations Board, Organizer Harry Simon reported.

In the first contest, the AFL International Upholsterers Union won by a vote of 201 to 48 among the employes of George H. Hees Son & Co.

The second election, conducted among employes of the Toronto General Hospital, was won by the Building Service Employes International Union by a vote of 304 to 41.

TEXTILE UNION TRIUMPHS IN BIG MILL ELECTION

Lawrence, Mass.—The United Textile Workers of America (AFL) overwhelmingly won an election in the Pacific Mills plant here. The plant employs 5,000 workers.

Of the 3,767 votes cast in the election, the United Textile Workers received 2,183 votes as against 1,157 for the company union. The remainder of the votes were either challenged, void, or for no union.

THE AFL PRESENTS . . . . "AMERICA UNITED" * At 1:15 P.M., EWT, Over NBC

Date	Guest	Topic	Panel Members
Mar. 18	George Meany	Wage Policy	Phil Pearl, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Albert S. Goss, National Grange
Mar. 25	David Lilienthal	More TVA's?	Robert J. Watt, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Ed. O'Neal, Am. Farm Bureau Fed.
April 1	Solicitor General Fahy	Tolerance	Phil Pearl, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Paul Sifton, National Farmers Union

* Because a number of radio stations are carrying the program by transcription at another hour or even at a later date, please consult the radio listings in your local paper for the exact time "America United" goes on the air in your community.

Torpedoed And Captured By Nazis, Five AFL Seamen Now Back Home

New York City.—Five unsung AFL war heroes arrived here on the diplomatic exchange ship S.S. Gripsholm after many heartbreaking months in Nazi prison camps.

The five sailors, members of the International Seafarers' Union, were the survivors of U-boat sinkings which took the lives of many of their fellow union members.

All the repatriated seamen had stories of privation and hardship to tell. Three of them, Ralph Piehet, William Weaver and Rufus Stough, were aboard the Jonothan Sturgis of the Mississippi Shipping Co. when it was sunk in February, 1943. The others, Paul Petro and John F. Morteverde, were captured after the sinking of the S.S. Honomu, of the Matson Line, on July 5, 1942. Since then they have lived on German subs, prison ships and in Nazi prison camps.

During their imprisonment, about the only bright spot in their lives was the regular arrival of SIU packages of food and cigarettes sent to them by their union.

Petro said that when his ship was sunk nineteen men managed to get away in a lifeboat. After twenty-three days on the open sea, eleven had died and only eight survived when a German submarine picked them up.

The sub landed Petro and his mates at a Norwegian port and they were taken to a Norwegian prison camp where their treatment can be summed up in one word—brutal. Later they were moved to Denmark and from there to Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

The survivors of the Sturgis sinking were not picked up until forty days had passed and later, when they were transferred by the Nazi sub to a prison ship, the vessel hit a mine off the Norwegian coast and sank after the explosion. They finally were taken to Germany too.

On arriving in New York, the repatriated sailors who had been exchanged for German prisoners, were met by their relatives and union representatives. The SIU gave them a real welcome with a round of parties that lasted two days.

Rufus Stough was most proud of the fact that he had carried his union button through the whole ordeal and he insisted that it is the only union button that has survived more than two years in a Nazi prison camp.